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 SHORT COMMUNICATION

A nest of the wasp *Odynerus spinipes* (L.) (Hymenoptera: Eumenidae) robbed by *Lasius niger* (L.) ants.—On a brief visit to Crow Wood and Meadow, a wildlife reserve of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust at Turnastone, Herefordshire, SO340359, with a party from the Dipterists Forum and the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society on 13.vi.1997, I came upon an active colony of the eumenid wasp *Odynerus spinipes* (L.) nesting in a floodcut vertical bank in alluvium above a small stream. The rubytailed wasps *Pseudospinolia neglecta* (Shuckard) and *Chrysis viridula* L. were active about the bank.

One wasp was seen affixing a pellet of wet mud to the latticework of the downwardly-curved 'chimney' outside its burrow, but there was no time to study the origin of the material used. Returning wasps entered their burrows directly, so that it would have been possible to photograph them only by selecting one burrow and waiting for its owner to return. Just one wasp got no further than putting its head and thorax into its chimney and then backed away, repeating this and finally sitting outside its nest on the vertical bank. The explanation became apparent after a minute or so, when a *Lasius niger* (L.) ant appeared from between the soil lattice of the chimney (Plate IV). Other ants emerged, then one carried a green weevil larva with which the nest had been provisioned. The wasp just sat and watched. Soon a trail of ants co-operated to carry off six weevil larvae in quick succession, 20cm. up the bank to a hole resembling a wasp burrow that had lost its chimney. Some of the prey were removed between the network of mud particles of the chimney.

The ants had presumably gained access to the nest without having had to climb down the outside of the chimney and through its apical opening, as they would have to do in the case of the more solid-walled chimneys of *Odynerus reniformis* (Gmelin). What advantage the wasps gained by their flimsy construction I was unable to discover without being left behind to face the next shower beneath an even flimsier cover of leaves.

Other aculeates at this bank were: *Crossocerus megacephalus* (Rossius), *Dipogon variegatus* (L.), *Lasioglossum leucozonium* (Schrank) and *L. rufitarse* (Zett.), all females.—R. W. J. UFFEN, 4 Mardley Avenue, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 0UD.